Last week's winners: Monday 12/5/03   Friday 16/5/03

1st	Hans/Ian	63 %	1st =	Hans/Jan (Nor)	50 VP
2nd	Chuck/Don	57 %	1st =	Chuck/Gerry	50 VP

How Do You Expect Suits to Split?

The thing to remember is that even numbers split badly, odd numbers split evenly. You need these little gems in order to follow the analysis given later.

3 out	3-0 = 22 %	2-1 = 78 %			
4 out	4-0 = 10 %	3-1 = 50 %	2-2 = 40 %		
5 out	5-0 = 4 %	4-1 = 28 %	3-2 = 68 %		

very important ___↑

Scoring   Ian asked to explain how the scoring works. For any of you who are not sure
about vulnerability, doubled contracts (making and going down), game
bonuses, slam bonuses and how I score up pairs or team events, I have produced a separate leaflet. One question that I am frequently asked is what score do you get for a passed out hand? Obviously zero, but do you get an average or something else in a pairs event? Sometimes zero is good! Everything is explained. Now when Ian asked me, I suspect that he was not really expecting 20 pages, but then I don't do things by halves.
Editor's Note. Appendix A.

   If something is worth doing, then it's worth doing well. If I have an opinion, then I express it. Mind you, I am trying to tone it down. The 'war' is over so no 'politics' this week.
   So what can we talk about (as well as bridge). The weather? Well into the rainy season now. Good stuff, the authorities no longer have an excuse to cut off the water supplies and the water truck pirates will have to find an honest living. No comment upon how well Pattaya's lovely new drainage system works when it rains. And what's blocking up all the drains? Why is it that it is impossible to buy anything in Pattaya without getting a plastic bag with it?

What Do You Lead?

West	North		South		
♠ A62	-		1♦		(1) 4th suit forcing
♥ Q974	1♥		1♠		(3) looking for slam
♦ 5	2♣	(1)	2♥	(2)	(4) 3 key cards
♣ J1096	3♠	(3)	4NT		
	5♣	(4)	6♠		
	pass				

   What is your opening lead? Answer overleaf.

What Do You Lead – Solution

Work out the distribution. South has four ♠'s and three ♥'s. He cannot have five ♠'s as he opened 1♦ - if he had six ♦'s and five ♠'s then he would not have supported ♥'s at (2). 2♥ at (2) promises 3 card support. North almost certainly does not have five ♠'s (he bid ♥'s before ♠'s, if he had five ♠'s then he must have six ♥'s). North is 4-4 or 4-5 (♠ ♥) in the majors. Thus East has two ♠'s and at most one ♥.

East must initially lead a ♥, take the first round of trumps with the ♠A and give East his ruff.

Dealer:	♠ J1074		West	North	East	South
South	♥ AJ62					
Both vul	♦ A2		-	-	-	1♦
	♣ AK4		pass	1♥	pass	1♠
			pass	2♣ (1)	pass	2♥ (2)
♠ A62	N	♠ 85	pass	3♠ (3)	pass	4NT
♥ Q9743	W E	♥ 5	pass	5♣ (4)	pass	6♠
♦ 5	S	♦ 108743	pass	pass	pass	
♣ J1096		♣ Q8752				
	♠ KQ93		(1)	4ᵗʰ suit		
	♥ K108		(3)	looking for slam		
	♦ KQJ96		(4)	3 key cards		
	♣ 3					

Many players will automatically start with a singleton. They hope for a ruff, but for that to happen their partner must gain the lead. Not only is that a very remote proposition here (why did South bid slam), but it is silly because if East does have a trick then the slam is down anyway.

A Response to 1NT ?

West	East	
		This is board 8 from Monday. At my table my partner (West) opened 1NT, 15-17. What should East bid? Many would say
♠ AQJ5	♠ K83	8 points, so an invitational 2NT. But not those of you who
♥ K1064	♥ 982	have read my paper on hand evaluation? What happened in
♦ KQ10	♦ 542	real life? I passed (of course), the hand is totally flat with
♣ 95	♣ AJ43	poor intermediates and is not worth an invitation. And at the
		other tables? One reached 2NT and another 3NT. Both,

obviously, going down. The only other player to pass the 1NT opening was Hans (so we don't always disagree). Passing with this flat garbage earns a joint top.

And the opening bid? A 'flat' 15. But this West hand is not totally flat; 4432 is far superior to 4333 and need not deduct for shape. The hand has two reasonable 4 card suits with good intermediates and is a perfect strong 1NT opener. Note that a small doubleton is always OK for a 1NT opener. However, if partner raises you to 2NT then this hand is little more than minimum and should pass. I guess both overbid at the table where 3NT
(-2) was reached. If I was vulnerable at teams with the West hand then I would *perhaps* have a shot at 3NT if partner raised to 2NT, but certainly not at pairs. Incidentally, Chuck would also pass with this East hand, Gerry would invite.

An Interesting Big Hand　　　　　As promised last week, Board 15 from Friday 9th .

Dealer:　　♠ AKQJ54
South　　　♥ AKQ
N-S vul　　♦ -
　　　　　　♣ AQ32

	West (Jan)	North (Chuck)	East (Hans)	South (Gerry)
	-	-	-	pass
	pass	2♣	pass	2♦
	pass	2♠	pass	4♠
	pass	6♠	all pass	

♠ 2　　　　　N　　　♠ 876
♥ 432　　W　E　　♥ 76
♦ KJ875　　S　　　♦ A10942
♣ J876　　　　　　♣ K104

　　　　　♠ 1093
　　　　　♥ J10985　　Now how about the bidding? Seems OK to me.
　　　　　♦ Q63　　　As it happens, 6♥ is a better contract because of the
　　　　　♣ 95　　　　entry problems to the South hand. But difficult to
　　　　　　　　　　　bid? 6♠ is a good contract.

　　　First of all, let's look at the bidding. In particular South's 4♠ bid. Should he have bid 3♥? Chuck says yes, Hans says no. And what do I say? It is really up to your partnership style. Hans would prefer a much better suit for the bid. Also, 1093 with a doubleton is excellent support. 4♠ will often be the best contract. You cannot say that 4♠ is wrong (I guess you can – Chuck did!). But why 4♠ when 3♠ would be forcing? 4♠ shows a weaker hand (fast arrival) and is correct here (if you wish not to introduce your ♥ suit).

　　　Anyway, 6♠ is a good contract; but how good? The play was fairly straightforward. Hans led a trump and Chuck drew another round. If trumps had split 2-2 he was home. They did not, and there is a blockage in the ♥ suit. So you now have to try ♥A, ♥K and ♥Q. Unfortunately, the ♥Q is ruffed. No problem, enter dummy with it's last high trump, run the last two ♥'s (pitching ♣'s) and finally the ♣ finesse. Unfortunately this also fails, but a gallant effort. All would have been well had I not opened my big mouth! I said that the contract *can* be made! Think about it before you read on.

　　　Chuck's line is certainly as good as any? It succeeds if trumps are 2-2. Failing that it succeeds if the hand with 3 trumps also has 3 or more ♥'s. Failing that it succeeds if the ♣ finesse works. Pretty good odds (about 80% by my reckoning).

　　　Hans suggested another line. Win the lead in dummy and immediately finesse the ♣. If this works you are home, ruff a ♣ (high) in dummy – you then have just one ♣ loser and don't need the ♥'s to split. If the finesse fails then West will return another trump. You cannot now afford to ruff in dummy with the last trump and so you have to again lead ♥A, ♥K and ♥Q. This line suffers the same fate as Chuck's. At first sight it may seem superior but actually it is exactly the same (you just try the same things in a different order). It appears that Hans' line gives you another chance (ruff a ♣ in dummy) but actually that is an illusion. For that to happen then the finesse must work and Chuck's line also wins if the finesse works. Chuck's line is just as good (I believe).

　　　Just one final very valid point. Hans prefers his finesse line because, if the finesse loses, then East may well not continue with another ♠, but try to cash ♦A. You are then OK as you can ruff two ♣'s in dummy. A very valid point. Perhaps this line is the best practical shot? I believe that East should return a trump because he can see ♣ ruffs looming in dummy. Some people, however, may not be able to resist the temptation to 'cash the setting(?) trick'. It is very unlikely that North would leap so majestically to 6♠ if he had a ♦ loser in addition to a ♣ loser. Anyway, let's assume perfect defence and that East will continue with trumps if he has one. So which line is best?

　　　I have had a go at establishing the odds for these lines. It is a rough calculation and I have ignored a few unlikely factors (such as 5-0 ♥ splits, singleton ♣ etc.). Let's just check the maths (you have to do this by going through the cases that fail), the %'s given here are the ones when it is unfavourable for you: -

Chuck's line: -	%		Hans' line: -	%
no 2-2 trump split	60		♣ finesse	50
3 trumps has 3(+) ♥'s	70		no 2-2 trump split	60
♣ finesse	50		3 trumps has 3(+) ♥'s	70

To get the actual odds of this contract *failing*, you multiply these three percentages. So we get 21%, or a 79% success rate for both lines.

Now then, is the contract makable as the cards lie? And if so, is it, as Chuck suggests, just a double dummy line that is actually inferior? My (double dummy?) line is to win the first trick in dummy, lead a ♦ and pitch the ♥A! (Thus chucking a blocking ♥ on a 'loser'). You win any return, draw a 2nd round of trumps (if the return was not a trump). Cash ♥K and ♥Q, over to dummy with ♠10 and claim. The ♣K is irrelevant. Is this a better line? Close. Let's do the maths. This time the calculation is different. The contract always succeeds if trumps are 2-2. Failing that, it's also OK if ♥'s are 3-2; even a worse ♥ break is OK as long as the 3 trump hand has the ♥'s. I'll just take the simplistic calculation and ignore this last possibility. Again, these %'s are for the losing option: -

Terry's line: -	%	
no 2-2 trump split	60	Multiply these two and you get 19% failure,
♥'s fail to split 3-2	32	or an 81% success rate.

These %'s are very approximate, I'm not the mathematician I once was and don't go in for decimal points! I have also omitted a few less likely permutations. Hans and Chuck queried the 60 % figure above. They say that after 1 round of trumps then there are just two out which are then more likely to split evenly, and so this figure should be about 50%. This theory would make all my %'s wrong. I answer this incorrect reasoning in full later.

So nothing in it. I admit that I would probably have taken Chuck's (or Hans' line) had I not just seen the play. I guess if you are good enough to calculate these odds (more exactly than me) and select the best line at the table then you would not be playing in a Bridge club in Pattaya, but at the World championships. Hardly important at IMPs, but Chuck's line may be superior at pairs as he has chances of an overtrick. Han's line has less chance of an overtrick, but gives the defence a chance to slip up. No chance of an overtrick with my line! But it *was* IMPs. Which line is best? Got a 3-sided coin?

Our News-Sheet

What topics should I cover? Hans and Chuck expressed the opinion that some of the material was a bit complex for most members. Sorry Hans/Chuck, I'll try to write things that you can understand in future (only joking guys!). Guess they're right, I will try to concentrate on areas of interest to the majority of the club. If you have a topic that you would like covered, or perhaps a hand that was difficult to bid then let me know (I am *still* working on RKCB).

A Take-Out Double?   South 18 from Friday

♠ AQ632   RHO deals and opens 1♣. What is your bid. A very experienced player
♥ Q107   doubled with this hand. I was shocked! Very occasionally it may be
♦ J52   correct to double with only 3 cards in one unbid major, but here you also
♣ KJ   have a very bad holding in another unbid suit (♦'s). A take out double
                 should show shortage in the suit bid and tolerance to play in the other 3
suits. This hand is totally unsuitable; because 4 of the points are in the opponent's suit, because it contains a decent 5 card major and because two of the unbid suits are just 3 cards (with just 3 points between them). A really appalling take-out double. Simply overcall 1♠. Hans and Chuck totally agree with me on this one. If both Hans and Chuck agree with me, then this covers the whole spectrum and you can be pretty sure that it is 100% correct.

Minor Suit Contracts? – NT is usually preferable   Board 21 from Monday.

I have frequently said that you should avoid minor suit contracts if NT is a viable option. NT scores more, and at the game level, 9 tricks is usually easier than 11.

West	East	West	East	Obviously a very silly contract, so who's
				fault? West said that his 2♦ bid showed
♠ 1043	♠ AJ85	-	1♦	a weak hand. This is a very poor bid
♥ 9875	♥ A	2♦	4♦	with a doubleton. Some players would
♦ K5	♦ A10976	all pass		bid 1NT, I would never deny a 4 card
♣ KQ102	♣ AJ4			major and would prefer 1♥. And East's
				2ⁿᵈ bid? If West had bid 1NT, then raise

to 3NT. If West had bid 1♥ then, again, I would never deny a 4 card major and would bid either 1♠ or 2♠, depending upon your partnership style. West should then bid 1NT (which East raises to 3NT) over 1♠ and West should bid 3NT over a 2♠ rebid by East. All sensible bidding sequences lead to 3NT. What happened at the other tables? It was played 4 times, the final contracts were 3NT, 5♦, 4♦, and 1♦! A pretty poor showing, only 3NT and 1♦ made. What more can I say? Do not look for minor suit games (or partscores!) when 3NT is a distinct possibility. Anyway, a minor suit game has to make 11 tricks and about 28 high card points is the expected norm. Not enough here. Keep it simple and try 3NT. Remarkably easy on this hand if you stick to my advice and never deny 4 card majors.

Incidentally, I said above that East's rebid should be '1♠ or 2♠, depending upon your partnership style'. I know Chuck's and Hans' style pretty well, and they are different here. Chuck would rebid 2♠, forcing. Hans would rebid 1♠, forcing.

Personally, I would go along with Chuck here (1♠ is not forcing, so bid 2♠) but it really is a partnership agreement. In UK it is apparently the same as USA, Gerry would bid 2♠ as 1♠ is not forcing in (English) Acol.

Keep the Dangerous Opponent out.   Board 8 from Friday

North	South
♠ 5	♠ A32
♥ A84	♥ Q10763
♦ AJ872	♦ K
♣ Q632	♣ AKJ10

At the table where I was kibitzing, West dealt and opened 2♠ (weak). Now 6♣ or 6♥ are both reasonable propositions, but perhaps not too easy to reach, especially after the pre-empt. So 4♥ is a very good spot. Unfortunately, this contract may also be difficult to reach and 3NT was bid at the table. So, you get a ♠ lead. Obviously you duck two rounds and win ♠A on the 3rd round. West has the remaining 3 ♠'s. How do you make the contract? You have 4 ♣'s, 2 ♦'s, 1 ♥ and 1♠ = 8 tricks. You need one more and this must come from ♥'s. At the table, South tried ♥A and small to the ♥Q. Unfortunately West had ♥K and so that was two down. Is there a better line? Yes! East has no more ♠'s, he can be allowed to get the lead. You must not allow West to win another trick. The answer is to lead ♥Q towards the North hand and let it ride if not covered. This line only fails if West has both ♥K and ♥J, in which case there is no play for the contract. If East has ♥KJ9 then this line gets one less trick. Unimportant. It was teams and making the contract safe is all important.

Normally, when playing ♥ A84   opposite ♥ Q10763   it is correct to lay down the ace and then play towards the Q1076, but not if you cannot afford to let West to win a trick.

The motto? If one opponent has the setting tricks, the don't let him in. Try to find a line of play such that he never gets the lead, even if it may concede an extra trick.

Making a Small Slam?

North	South	West	North	East	South
♠ Q54	♠ AK6	2♥ (1)	dbl	pass	6NT
♥ K32	♥ Q107	pass	pass	pass	
♦ AQ94	♦ KJ108				
♣ K63	♣ AQ9				

West leads the ♣J, how can South make twelve tricks? 3 ♠'s, 4 ♦'s and 3 ♣'s leaves two tricks needed from the ♥ suit. Perhaps 6♦ would have been a better contract? No. Surely there is a way to collect two ♥ tricks in 6NT? can you spot it?
Answer at the end of this news-sheet.

Impossible? - A Magic Trick?
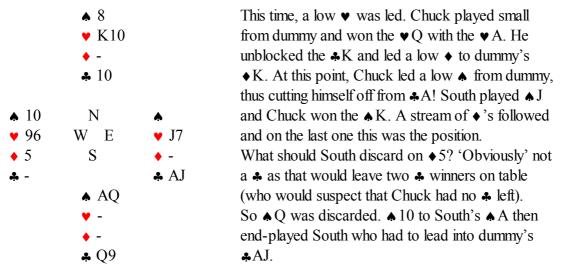
				West	North	East	South
Dealer:	♠ 874			(me)			
South	♥ K1083						
Both vul	♦ 1084			-	-	pass	2♠ (weak)
	♣ 1054			3NT	all pass		

♠ K10	N	♠ 62	This was the bidding at my table.
♥ A96	W E	♥ J7542	
♦ AQJ9653	S	♦ K	
♣ K		♣ AJ832	

♠ AQJ953
♥ Q
♦ 72
♣ Q976

First, how about the bidding? The 3NT bid over a pre-empt has a wide range of strength. It denies a decent 4 card major but promises a stop in the pre-empt suit. The hand often contains a good minor suit (as in this case). Do not worry about having an unbid suit unstopped (partner is sure to have something).

One E-W pair reached 5♦ for a bottom score. I guess that I am repeating myself when I say that 3NT is often easier than 5 of a minor – and scores more if there are more than 9 tricks. With a long minor suit, think 3NT! I not only thought it – I bid it!

I held the West hand and was declarer in 3NT on a ♠ lead. It seemed pretty straightforward to me. The opening lead was ducked (♠J) to my ♠K. I unblocked the ♣K, over to dummy with ♦K, ♣A, back to ♥ A and claimed +2, conceding the last two tricks (making 1 ♠, 1 ♥, 7 ♦'s and 2 ♣'s). An excellent contract and par result, so should be a good board? Upon opening the traveller I was amazed to see that one pair had made 12 tricks in the same contract. Impossible? A mistake? A revoke? Then came a loud roar from across the room. 'What, only 11 tricks Terry? *I* made 12!' It was, of course, Chuck. How did he do it? He could not resist telling me all about it later: -

	♠ 8	This time, a low ♥ was led. Chuck played small
	♥ K10	from dummy and won the ♥Q with the ♥A. He
	♦ -	unblocked the ♣K and led a low ♦ to dummy's
	♣ 10	♦K. At this point, Chuck led a low ♠ from dummy,

thus cutting himself off from ♣A! South played ♠J and Chuck won the ♠K. A stream of ♦'s followed and on the last one this was the position.

♠ 10	N	♠	What should South discard on ♦5? 'Obviously' not
♥ 96	W E	♥ J7	a ♣ as that would leave two ♣ winners on table
♦ 5	S	♦ -	(who would suspect that Chuck had no ♣ left).
♣ -		♣ AJ	So ♠Q was discarded. ♠10 to South's ♠A then

♠ AQ
♥ -
♦ -
♣ Q9

end-played South who had to lead into dummy's ♣AJ.

Chuck said 'put that in your new-sheet and smoke it'. What can I say? A lesser person might say 'lucky lead'. Another might say South can easily avoid the end-play by taking ♠A at trick 4. A third might ask what if North has ♣Q so South keeps his ♠AQ?

I simply say: 'Good show - I take my hat off to you, sir'

How the Odds Change - Or do they?

Last week I gave you a few basic %'s. Hans, Chuck and myself were discussing the expected split when there are 4 cards out. The relevant statistics are : -

Case A:	2 out	2-0 = 48 %	1-1 = 52 %	
Case B:	4 out	4-0 = 10 %	3-1 = 50 %	2-2 = 40 %

Hans and Chuck both agree with these basic statistics. But consider the case of, say, a trump suit with 4 small cards missing (as our 'interesting big hand'). Initially, the odds on 4-0, 3-1 or 2-2 splits are Case B. Suppose you pull one round of trumps and both follow. Obviously the 4-0 option is now ruled out and the remaining two trumps split either 2-0 or 1-1, but what are the odds now?

Hans and Chuck say that there are now just two cards out and it reverts to Case A. Not so. We started off with Case B and have eliminated the 4-0 option; the relative %'s of Case B still apply. So we now have after 1 successful round of trumps:

Terry says	2-0 = 55.555 %	1-1 = 44.444 %
Chuck and Hans say	2-0 = 48 %	1-1 = 52 %

What argument can I find to persuade these two of the error of their ways? Try this. You have 100 such hands with 4 trumps out all lined up in a row on 100 tables. The expected splits are as Case B, so you expect 50 tables to split 3-1 and 40 tables to split 2-2. You get your servants to start playing for you and you dismiss the 10 that encountered a 4-0 split. The lions have to be fed on something. The odds have changed in you favour and it is now OK for you to play these remaining 90 boards. But what are now the odds of a favourable 1-1 split? Hans/ Chuck say 52%. I say that these 90 remaining tables have not changed; 50 of them were initially 3-1 and are now 2-0. Just 40 will be 1-1, so it is 44.444%. Nothing has changed. Nothing changed with Hans' or Chuck's opinion either.

Another way of looking at it: If these final 90 boards are indeed split 48%-52% then the original distribution was 10, 43, 47 and premise B is violated. Premise A is only valid when you have 11 cards and there are two out; it is not applicable if the suit has been played before.

I failed to convince these unbelievers. Given my limited powers of persuasion, we agreed to await the return of Chris to adjudicate. Who do *you* think is right? If you go with the 'odds' then there are two excellent card players against just little me (I'm not so tall – Odessa?), so they are much more likely to know what they are talking about and be correct? I have been wrong before.   I recall once in 1957, …or was it 1958? Remember that hat that I took off, I'll eat it if I am wrong here. How much are you willing to wager?

Casinos make an excellent living out of people who think that they understand the odds but do not. The difference between 52% and 44% is enormous (the difference between winning or losing). So who's going to lose their shirt when Pattaya gets its casino? I sure won't be backing these two.

Chuck said something about restricted choice. Indeed, odds change when there are honour cards about that either appear or fail to on the first round. That is an exceedingly complex subject, well beyond the scope of these news-sheets. I have specifically stated 4 small cards missing and you should assume that defenders will not signal but follow randomly; so restricted choice does not apply.

Making a Small Slam – Solution

South is declarer in 6NT and West leads the ♣J.

The ♦ suit is presumably 6-1, South makes 6NT if East has the singleton ♥J, but that's against the odds. But there is a solution if West has ♥AJxxxx (or ♥AJxxx).

Dealer:
West
N-S vul

	♠ Q54		West	North	East	South
	♥ K32					
	♦ AQ94		2♥	dbl	pass	6NT
	♣ K63		pass	pass	pass	

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♠ 103          N          ♠ J9872
♥ AJ9764    W     E       ♥ 5
♦ 65           S          ♦ 732
♣ J108                    ♣ 7542
               ♠ AK6
               ♥ Q107
               ♦ KJ108
               ♣ AQ9
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South must first strip the hand, so three rounds of ♠'s, three rounds of ♣'s and four rounds of ♣'s. That leaves this position with the lead in the North hand: -

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               ♠ -
               ♥ K32
               ♦ -
               ♣ -
```

A low ♥ is now led from dummy. If East happened to have the ♥J then South covers and all is well. In this (the more likely lay-out) East plays low and South inserts the ♥Q. Whether West takes his ♥A now or not he is lost. Endplayed. If he takes the ♥A then he must lead into South's ♥Q10. If he allows South to win the ♥Q then South's 12th trick is made by leading up to the ♥K

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♠ -            N          ♠ J9
♥ AJ9       W     E       ♥ 5
♦ -            S          ♦ -
♣ -                       ♣ -
               ♠ -
               ♥ Q107
               ♦ -
               ♣ -
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Well, that's it for this week folks. Perhaps a bit complicated this time; but I have to respond when our two leading players gang up and disagree with me, don't I? Haven't I done well in not mentioning America(ns) once. Remember that Fawlty Towers episode (don't mention the war). And do I *really* know anything about statistics and probability? Perhaps not too much these days (does Mekong really eat up the grey cells?). I'm a bit rusty now, but in my youth…